

2 Dogged Lawmen on a Murder Case

By Kenneth Bredemeier
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The police work that went into Fairfax County's investigation of last spring's Pagan gang slayings involved a nationwide, five-month search that went far beyond the usual demands made upon a county police force.

The tale of that investigation, compiled in voluminous official reports and investigators' notes, is a textbook study of dogged police work involving hundreds of interviews in out-of-the-way places, several good "breaks," missed chances at capture and cooperation among law enforcement agencies ranging from the FBI to Oregon State police units stationed at Grants Pass, Ore.

The files of the search give an insight into the complex and frequently highly efficient means of trace and identification which police agencies across the country have at their disposal.

In the course of following leads, Fairfax investigators James P. Riddel and Riley J. Wilson traveled some 20,000 miles, penetrating the relatively closed subculture of a nomadic motorcycle gang, the Pagans, gathering information about persons who by habit often shun the police and the world of the "straights."

As a result principally of their efforts, 11 persons implicated in the crimes of last spring have been apprehended. Nine of the eleven have pleaded guilty to a variety of charges stemming from the slayings of two members of a rival Northern Virginia motorcycle gang, the Saints, last March.

The other two in custody are in out-of-state jails, fighting extradition to Fairfax.

Riddel, 35, and Wilson, 30, have been Fairfax policemen for 10 and nine years, respectively. Riddel has been a criminal investigator for



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Officers Riley T. Wilson (left) and James P. Riddel with some of their notes.

six years and Wilson for three.

They were tapped for the Pagans investigation, Riddel says, apparently because of several previous inquiries they conducted of crimes linked to motorcycle gangs.

The slayings of Lewist T. Hartless, 21, and Richard Newland, 19 were the last act in a steadily increasing conflict between some of the members of each gang. The strife began in mid-Febru-

ary, police say, when Hartless and several friends roughed up a 17-year old prospective Pagan member and stole his black leather jacket.

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Some two weeks later, investigator Wilson says, four Pagans raided the Saints' headquarters in Alexandria and, in a scuffle, Hartless shot Bradley (Lucifer) Hinckley, a Pagan, in the shoulder. The Pagans stomped on Hartless' broken leg, already set in a cast, and rebroke it.

Kangaroo Court

On March 26, Hartless and Newland were abducted in Northern Virginia and taken to an Arlington house, police say. "There was sort of a kangaroo court," according to Wilson, after which the two Saints were beaten. Twenty-one persons were present in the house; not all of them participated in the beatings.

The two then were taken to an isolated woods near Tysons Corner in Fairfax and, stabbed and shot to death.

The night of the abductions, Riddel and Wilson, unaware of the killings, began interviewing their own contacts in the motorcycle gangs in hopes of finding Hartless and Newland, who had been reported missing. One of those interviewed was Richard A. Scarborough, whom Riddel describes as the head of the Northern Virginia Pagans.

"He denied knowing anything, but you could tell he was really upset," Riddel recalled. On March 30, Scarborough talked with police again. "He wouldn't say they were dead, but told police where they might be," said Riddel. Scarborough's tips netted nothing.

First Break

More interviews yielded nothing. Then, on April 7, the first break in the case came. Wilson found and interviewed the youth whose jacket had been stolen in February. He told police of the March 26 session in Arlington and identified the others there. His account did not include details of the slayings.

That same day, Riddel received a call from an informant, described by the investigator as being about

30 and a former "hard-core" Pagan. "He gave me the basic information—who did what. He said he couldn't live with himself anymore."

The next day, Riddel interviewed the informer in front of a video tape setup. The tape subsequently was presented to a special grand jury. Other than testimony by Riddel and Wilson, the informer's hearsay was the only information the jury received. It indicted 10 Pagans.

Riddel said the informer requested that his testimony be taped so he could avoid reporters covering the jury session. Police have refused to divulge his identity.

Based on the descriptions supplied by the informer and the 17-year old prospective Pagan, police lookouts and bulletins describing the suspects were transmitted around the country.

Helped by the informant's information and Scarborough, the police found the bodies of Hartless and Newland on April 8. Scarborough since has pleaded guilty of being an accessory after the abduction and is serving a six-month jail sentence.

Meanwhile, the suspects named in the indictments had had about two weeks to scatter across the country from the place of their alleged crimes.

From police files made available to a reporter, and with the help of investigators Riddel and Wilson, some of the travels of these suspects can be reconstructed.

Here are the movements of Alexander F. (Head) Akers, 30, who since has pleaded guilty to murder in the Hartless and Newland slayings:

On the night of March 26, Akers and his wife and Harry A. (Buck) Williams, arrived in Wytheville, Va., where Akers' mother lives. They stayed the night, according to Fairfax prosecutor Robert F. Horan Jr., and for the next 2½ weeks, drove across the country, stopping in Omaha, Neb., where Mrs. Akers stayed with relatives.

Akers and Williams continued on to Houston, and on April 16, the FBI narrowly missed arresting them, according to Horan.

That day, Akers and Williams waited in a car in Houston while a friend stopped at a Western Union office to pick up \$50 that had been wired to Williams by a relative. FBI agents were waiting and as they questioned, Williams and Akers sensed trouble and fled.

Officers Push on

Meanwhile, Riddel and Wilson were themselves traveling, frequently on their own time, to a series of interviews with past and present Pagans and ac-

quaintances, wives, brothers, sisters and girl friends of the suspects.

Riddle says he thinks people talked about the case because "they kept thinking it was a terrible murder, but they didn't want to believe their friends and relatives were involved, so they talked."

FBI reports say Akers and Williams "may have traveled" to San Antonio, Tex., about April 18, and then turned up again in Wytheville and then Rock, W.Va., where they allegedly stole a car. On May 8, state police in Grants Pass, Ore., stopped the car. Akers and Williams talked their way out.

Williams finally left Akers, hitchhiked back to Fairfax and surrendered on May 17. He told police Akers and his wife were headed for a "hippy colony" in Boulder, Colo.

On May 21, Akers rented a car in Boulder and headed for Seattle, where they found two other slaying suspects, Bradley Hinckley and Victor L. (Galloping Guinea) Cassara.

A few days later, a Boulder, Colo., policeman spotted the rented car, which by now was reported stolen, and alerted the FBI. On May 27, Akers and Hinckley were arrested by FBI agents while they slept in a room in Boulder.

Others arrested were:

- Albert F. (Filthy Frank) Schoepper, on April 8, in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., on several charges related to burglary. He has pleaded guilty to a charge of abduction.

- James (Professor) Cole and Issac O. (Bear) Farber by the FBI in the New York area on April 14 on information supplied by a girl friend of one of the men. Cole has pleaded guilty of the abduction and murder of Hartless and Farber has pleaded guilty of being an accessory after the fact of both murders.

- Gene (Bobba) Lambert by the FBI on May 18 in North Hollywood, Calif. He has pleaded guilty of being an accessory after the fact of both murders.

- Stewart (Jocko) Bailey

Layman Jr. by the FBI in Baltimore near a girl friend's house on May 5. He is being held in a Baltimore jail and is charged with conspiracy to abduct and murder, and with both murders.

- Alfred K. (Pappy) Duffy Jr. turned himself in to police on Sept. 16 in Galveston, Texas, but is fighting extradition to Virginia. He is charged with conspiracy to abduct.

Within the next three weeks, eight of those convicted are scheduled in court for sentencing. The charges to which they have pleaded carry penalties ranging from one day in jail to death.

Says Fairfax prosecutor Horan: "It was an absolutely fantastic investigation. Riddel and Wilson just never let go."